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Court Announces Employee Service Awards for 2015—Portland Man Receives Maine Judicial Branch Career Performance Award.

November 25, 2015. For Immediate Release—Portland, Maine. Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley, of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, today announced the recipients of the Maine Judicial Branch employee performance awards for 2015.

Chief Justice Saufley announced that the recipient of the 2015 Judicial Branch Career Performance Award is Jeffrey Henthorn of Portland, Maine who serves as Director of Court Facilities. “As Director of Court Facilities,” said Chief Justice Saufley, “Jeff is responsible for the safe operation of 36 courthouses, spread throughout the state, the Violations Bureau in Lewiston, and the Administrative Office of the Courts in Portland. He is the master of the big picture as well as the small details. He is responsible for numerous capital projects and contracts, large and small, necessary to keep the courthouses safe, accessible, and open for business. Jeff represents many career employees, who work quietly, behind the scenes, to keep our court system operating.”

The Special Service Award was given this year to the Court Management System Request For Proposal (RFP) Steering Committee. This group is involved in preparing for the purchase of a modern case management and electronic filing system and wrote the RFP issued earlier this fall for this multi-million dollar project. The employees honored were: John T. Smith of Brunswick, Service Center Manager; Beth Maddaus of Sumner, Manager of Clerks of Court; Ellen Hjelm of Windham, Director of Budget & Accounting; James “Ted” Ross of Cape Elizabeth, Deputy Chief, Judicial Marshals; Anne Jordan of South Portland, Manager of Process Improvement; Anita Alexander of Phippsburg, Clerk of Courts, West Bath District and Sagadahoc County Superior Courts; Superior Court Justice Anne Murray of Bangor and District Court Judge Susan Oram of Auburn. The Chief Justice said, “The ultimate success of the new case management system will be due, in large measure, to the extraordinary planning work of this team in 2015.”

Chief Justice Saufley announced that Chris Oberg of Winthrop, Manager of Application Development and Implementation is the 2015 Outstanding Judicial Employee of the Year. This award is conferred upon that person who best exemplifies the qualities of competence in providing court services, commitment to public service, respect, courtesy to fellow employees and members of the public, and a willingness to learn and grow. In naming Chris, the Chief Justice recognized the work of the entire team who developed the RFP for the case management system, but added, “ At the center of the success of that committee, was Chris Oberg, who with excellent project management skills, was able to successfully bring together finance, technology and court operations staff to develop the RFP.”

The Chief Justice also recognized Michele Haggan of Lewiston, Administrative Clerk in the Lewiston District Court, with a Special Service Award for her work implementing the unified criminal docket in Androscoggin County. Commenting on Ms. Haggan the Chief Justice said, “ Michelle Haggan is just a stellar public and court employee- she has great leadership skills with the clerks in the Lewiston District Court; when she works with the public she is knowledgeable and respectful; and she has been absolutely instrumental in implementing a wholly new court process for managing criminal cases in Androscoggin County. She is a role model for all court employees, and we are thrilled to recognize her this year, although, truth be told, she is star employee, year in and year out!”

The Roy Rice Award is given to that person, group, or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to the safety and well being of the employees of the Judicial Branch and people who participate in court activities. Chief Justice Saufley announced that this year’s winner is James T. “Ted” Ross, Deputy Chief of the Judicial Marshals. Chief Justice Saufley said, “Providing security for court employees, the judges, and the public is a challenging job each and every court day. Ted has been instrumental in improving the judicial marshal training and has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Judicial Marshals.”

The Chief Justice observed, “The Thanksgiving Holiday is an appropriate time to recognize and thank court employees for their public service. One of the highlights of my year is to read the nominations submitted for these awards. Each year we can only recognize a handful of Judicial Branch employees for their public service, but the ones we recognize also represent their colleagues. The honorees are people who understand that serving the public is a privilege. For members of the public coming to court, the experiences of filing or defending a case, being a witness, or contesting a traffic summons, can often be a stressful experience. I am proud of the way Judicial Branch employees serve the public with respect, helpfulness and efficiency each and every day. The employees recognized today by the Court and their fellow employees exemplify the public service provided by so many wonderful employees in the Judicial Branch, and I thank them for their public service. ”

